



Exit Memo:

United States Agency for International Development

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Executive Summary

In 2021, President Biden pledged that the United States would “help lead the world toward a more peaceful, prosperous future for all people.” Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USAID has played a central role in advancing that goal while strengthening America’s national security, expanding our economic prosperity, and upholding our nation’s values. With a presence in more than 100 countries and a deep global network of partnerships in communities, businesses, and governments around the globe, USAID is America’s foreign policy ground game.

With bipartisan support from both houses of Congress, the Biden-Harris Administration has ushered in a new era in USAID’s history, transforming the Agency’s impact by making USAID more responsive to global challenges, more efficient in its operations, and more catalytic in its approach.

Over the past four years, USAID has responded to a range of the world’s most pressing and complex challenges. We have bolstered democracies, fostered inclusive economic growth, supported women’s empowerment, fought climate change, played a central role in the U.S. government’s strategy to

help the people of Ukraine fight back against Putin’s unjust war; and countered the influence of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and other authoritarian actors. We have also led the world in addressing natural disasters and humanitarian crises; expanded our presence in geostrategically important areas around the world, including in Angola, Ecuador, Fiji, Maldives, and Papua New Guinea; and responded to threats posed by conflicts and global health emergencies, including the COVID-19 pandemic. With the Agency serving as a permanent member of the National Security Council for the first time in history, we brought development and humanitarian considerations—as well as essential perspectives from the communities where we work—to the center of government decision-making.

We’ve also gone farther than ever in maximizing the efficiency of every dollar we spend. We have reformed how USAID works, increasing our use of evidence and data, as well as cutting red tape and bureaucratic burdens, in order to channel taxpayer resources more effectively. We have modernized the Agency’s structure, creating three new Independent Offices to bring together expertise on major cross-cutting issues and reorganizing core aspects of our work into four new Bureaus focused on core development challenges in the 21st century. We

also created a second Deputy Administrator position to better provide the full operational, programmatic, and budgetary leadership required for one of the United States' premier foreign policy agencies. And, we strengthened our teams on the ground, including by taking unprecedented steps to empower our overseas local workforce, recruit the most diverse Foreign Service classes in USAID's history, and rebuild our Foreign Service workforce to its highest staffing level in a decade.

Finally, we've made our Agency much more catalytic, delivering progress far beyond our programs. Through USAID's convening power, our global footprint, our influence in key multilateral institutions, our growing linkages to the private sector, and our strategic communications channels, we have the potential to drive collective action far beyond the scope of our programming. We've strengthened USAID's role in the foreign policy space and urged our teams at home and abroad to see themselves as change agents rather than program implementers. We have boosted contributions from the private sector to USAID activities by 42 percent since 2021, and our public-private partnerships leveraged an average of \$5 from partners for every \$1 we provided in taxpayer money. And we made important progress on empowering local actors as we seek to make USAID's work more effective and sustainable—including by doubling the amount of funding provided to local partners compared to 2021.

This memo describes key USAID achievements over the four years of the Biden-Harris Administration and highlights how this Agency has driven progress on the range of challenges facing the world.

Responding to the World's Greatest Challenges

In the face of daunting challenges for the United States and the world, USAID demonstrated time and again an ability to achieve real impact—from responding to crises and wars, to leading on existential threats such as pandemics and climate change.

Standing with Ukraine

The Biden-Harris Administration stood with the people of Ukraine in support of their independence, territorial integrity, and sovereignty following Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. Ukraine's existential fight for democracy and security was met with strong bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress, and USAID was charged with delivering an unprecedented level of development assistance—close to \$35 billion since the invasion—as the people of Ukraine countered Vladimir Putin's efforts to destroy the country's economy, democracy, and way of life.

USAID's wide-ranging response included direct budget support that bolstered Ukraine's economy while enabling the government to provide emergency services and support to public employees—such as frontline health workers—undertaking essential duties at a time of crisis.



Photo by USAID


We stepped up to make it possible for Ukraine to access \$20 billion in immobilized Russian sovereign assets, executing by far the largest sovereign loan guarantee in USAID's history. And we helped build coalitions with allies, the private sector, and philanthropic partners to attract more investment into Ukraine's economy. The commitments and actions of USAID and the entire Biden-Harris Administration proved essential in leveraging resources from other partners; every dollar in economic and development assistance for Ukraine from the United States has drawn in \$3 more from other donors over the course of the war.

USAID demonstrated the American people's solidarity with the Ukrainian people—making it possible for nurses, teachers, and emergency responders to continue to be paid for their vital work; helping equip alternative school locations and printing millions of textbooks so kids could continue their education amid Russia's attacks; and supporting more than 42,000 volunteers to deliver emergency aid on the war's front lines. In the aftermath of Putin's brutal invasion, we helped evacuate residents under attack and reached some 16 million citizens with emergency food and shelter, health, access to safe drinking water, and psychosocial support. USAID provided more than \$2.6 billion in humanitarian assistance, which was complemented by more than \$8 billion in humanitarian aid from other countries. As the war has evolved, we have continued to provide assistance to 7 million internally displaced persons and nearly one million individuals living in hard-to-reach areas close to the front line. USAID also worked with the Ukrainian government to build long-term strength and stability by investing in the country's potential as a world leader in digital innovation, including by expanding the more than 100 services available through the government's Diia app.



Photo by USAID

One of the biggest threats to Ukraine's survival was Russia's decision to attack the agriculture sector, a pillar of Ukraine's economy as a traditional exporter of grain around the world—including to Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, and other countries facing acute food insecurity. As part of Russia's war effort, Putin set out to systematically destroy Ukraine's export capacity by blockading Ukraine's Black Sea ports, planting mines in farmland, and bombing grain storage facilities. In response, USAID rapidly stood up the Ukraine Agriculture Resilience Initiative to support Ukraine's embattled agriculture sector. Every taxpayer dollar we invested in Ukraine's agricultural sector leveraged more than \$6 from other partners, unlocking \$2.3 billion from the private sector and other donors—supporting the bedrock of Ukraine's economy and alleviating the global food security crisis exacerbated by Russia's war. Despite



the many obstacles caused by the war, Ukraine's grain exports have returned to their pre-war levels, and USAID has helped expand trade routes via land, sea, rail, and river ports to reach new markets. Since the start of the war, we have supported close to 40 percent of Ukraine's farmers in modernizing crop production, including the provision of seeds, fertilizer, irrigation, and grain storage solutions. These investments have not only helped Ukrainian farmers survive Putin's attacks, but will also help Ukraine emerge from the conflict with a strong taxpayer base and growing economy that is better integrated with its European neighbors.

USAID also led the U.S. government's effort to provide more than \$1.8 billion in energy assistance to increase Ukraine's energy security and resilience in the face of Russia's efforts to destroy the country's energy grid. USAID moved swiftly to help Ukraine secure equipment and materials needed to keep power, heat, and water flowing to millions of homes and businesses; mobile boiler houses to heat critical facilities including schools and hospitals; bucket trucks to help repair downed power lines; material to protect critical energy sites and repair workers; and autotransformers and hundreds of miles of pipes and cables. These efforts continue to benefit millions of Ukrainians across the country. Additionally, thanks in part to long-term USAID support initiated years prior to Russia's full-scale invasion, Ukraine successfully synchronized with

the European energy grid in 2022—further bolstering the country's energy security.

We made clear to the Ukrainian government that U.S. support came with the expectation that Ukraine would accelerate its reform efforts to combat corruption, strengthen democratic institutions, and uphold human rights. So USAID worked with Ukrainians to reinstate asset disclosure requirements for elected officials, reboot judicial institutions through competitive and merit-based processes, and advance critical economic and judicial reforms that strengthen revenue-generating institutions and build investor confidence. These and other efforts built on USAID's long-term investments, underscoring the significant dividends of USAID's institution-strengthening efforts under multiple prior administrations.

To manage and monitor U.S. assistance efforts in Ukraine effectively, we implemented multiple measures to uphold the highest standards of oversight and accountability, including third-party monitoring reviews of Ukraine's financial controls and tracking of U.S. funds. We also engaged with the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) to strengthen Ukraine's own audit institutions and controls. This system of checks prevented fraud, as documented by 35 audits from USAID's Inspector General and the GAO, and ensured USAID delivered assistance with unprecedented speed.

Bolstering Democracy and Democratic Bright Spots

With authoritarians emboldened and democracy under attack around the world, USAID took significant steps to expand and modernize the Agency's toolkit for strengthening democratic progress and accelerating reform in countries where leaders are working to advance democracy and the rule of law.

Amid widespread pessimism about the state of global democracy, we launched the Democracy Delivers Initiative in 2022 to surge a wide range of support and attention to emerging democratic bright spots—recognizing that when governments both undertake meaningful reform and deliver tangible progress on the priorities of citizens, democracy is more likely to endure. In each of the Initiative's current focus countries of Armenia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Fiji, Guatemala, Malawi, Maldives, Moldova, Nepal, and Zambia, we worked to grow—and target—investments from USAID and the broader U.S. government; mobilize and facilitate new partnerships with other donors, foundations, and the private sector; and help build broad coalitions to support reformers in delivering meaningful progress for their citizens.

Our work to facilitate new partnerships and investments in countries experiencing democratic openings spanned multiple sectors and focused on supporting economic and other progress that was likely to be visible to citizens. This underscored the Agency's commitment to using more of its capabilities, resources, and influence outside of the traditional "democracy" space for the purpose of advancing progress. For example, in addition to important democracy assistance, USAID partnered with the private sector to increase incomes for small-scale agricultural producers in Ecuador; improve economic connectivity between major resorts and local communities in Maldives, and expand support to entrepreneurs and cyber resilience in Moldova. In Guatemala, USAID partnered with companies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the local government to eliminate dirt floors and install domestic latrines to improve health and reduce malnutrition. Over the last two years, USAID more than doubled our support to Armenia, helped to stand up the country's new Corruption Prevention Commission, and played a central role in organizing the historic April 2024 Joint EU-U.S.-Armenia High-Level Meeting in Brussels that demonstrated the strong commitment between the United States and the European Union to a deepened partnership with Armenia since the 2018 Velvet Revolution.


To demonstrate our commitment to Democracy Delivers and also generate additional financial support from outside of USAID, we increased assistance for our initial cohort of countries by more than \$300 million across sectors, representing an overall increase of nearly 40 percent over the first two years of the Initiative. We mobilized nearly two dozen philanthropies and private-sector organizations to commit more than \$212 million to support democratic openings, and we garnered an additional commitment of more than \$576 million from interagency partners across the U.S. government, including the U.S.



Photo by USAID/OTI

International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and the Inter-American Foundation. We worked to further leverage the resources of the DFC, which announced an additional \$1.9 billion in projects to spur economic growth and investment in Democracy Delivers countries. And more than a dozen countries joined the United States in 2024 to launch a new Joint Commitment to Support Democratic Openings.

Democracies face challenges and setbacks everywhere, and the cohort of Democracy Delivers countries is no exception. At the same time, these countries have made meaningful progress on democratic and economic reforms that underscore why it is important to support citizens and reformers seeking to make change despite difficult circumstances. Fiji repealed draconian restrictions on journalists and publishers and allowed for more inclusive voter registration; Nepal's legislature passed a transitional justice bill with a near consensus including all major political parties, marking a significant step toward completion of Nepal's peace process; the Dominican Republic implemented asset forfeiture legislation and undertook dozens of high-profile corruption prosecution cases; Ecuador has hosted and provided legal status to hundreds of thousands of Venezuelan and other refugees from the region; Armenia strengthened its election management and increased civil society and media freedoms; Moldova achieved sufficient progress in all nine reform areas required for EU accession to begin negotiations with the EU, then further advanced the country's European path through a successful referendum on joining the EU supported by a majority of Moldovans; and Zambia successfully achieved key fiscal and debt-management benchmarks set by the International Monetary Fund that helped the country restructure its foreign debt obligations.



In 2023, we established the Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Bureau to lead USAID's efforts to invigorate democracy, advance human rights and justice, and strengthen governing institutions. Additionally, as part of the Biden-Harris Administration's designation of corruption as a national security threat in June 2021, USAID elevated anti-corruption efforts to a central feature of our development and democracy assistance—across all sectors. We issued an ambitious Anti-Corruption Policy that reoriented the Agency's focus from petty corruption to other, more damaging forms of corruption, such as transnational corruption, grand corruption, and kleptocracy. We built a suite of programs to help advocates and journalists expose corrupt dealings and follow ill-gotten gains across borders.

More broadly, USAID took bold steps to fortify independent journalism in response to the rise of two grave challenges: legal action against journalists and closure of independent media outlets. With corrupt and anti-democratic actors increasingly deploying legal threats to silence critical reporting, USAID created Reporters Shield to protect journalists from sham and costly lawsuits meant to put them out of business, and has now provided services including training, pre-publication review, and legal support to help defend journalists from suits aimed at silencing their work. We also launched new initiatives responding to the mass shuttering of local, independent media around the world as a result of rapidly changing media dynamics. USAID provided the seed funding for the International Fund for Public Interest Media, which has offered a lifeline to media outlets in 50 countries through grants that expanded coverage and made it possible to hire new journalists, and partnered with Microsoft to stand up the Media Viability Accelerator—a first-of-its-kind platform that has helped more than 600 representatives from media outlets throughout the world reshape their business models to compete more effectively for audiences and revenue.

We also deepened ties with countries seeking to diversify partnerships and reduce dependencies on Russia and the PRC. This included investments in programs to reduce such countries' crippling debt, strengthen energy security, promote transparent and accountable governance, and bolster resilience to cyberattacks and misinformation campaigns.

As part of President Biden's three successive Summits for Democracy and our push to strengthen local capacity and bolster frontline defenders of democracy and rights, USAID surged support to activists and organizations fighting corruption, injustice, and repression. We deepened our support for workers rights and trade unions by helping form the Multilateral Partnership for Organizing, Worker Empowerment, and Rights (M-POWER) and developing the new Powered by the People (PXP) initiative to foster USAID's engagement with grassroots activists. PXP facilitated new partnerships beyond the civil society groups that USAID had long worked with, and for the first time, provided support directly to social movements organizing around issues such as access to services and corruption. And, when citizens stood up to authoritarian regimes, we mobilized rapid and flexible support measures, including legal assistance and emergency relocations for individuals and organizations across 50 countries in 2024 alone.

We expanded our work with civil society and partner governments to build digital ecosystems that align with democratic values and support human rights, and we began partnerships with major multinational technology companies to offer skills training in cybersecurity, data privacy, cloud computing, and responsible AI. We launched the Donor Principles for Human Rights in the Digital Age, a blueprint for how governments can align digital investments with democratic values, and supported civil society in developing responses to strengthen information integrity and resilience.

Addressing the Climate Crisis and Ending Energy Poverty

The climate crisis imperils lives and livelihoods in every country where USAID works, and support to address the impacts of climate change is among the most frequent and urgent requests that USAID receives from our partner governments. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USAID stepped up to advance America's climate leadership abroad. We surged support to countries responding to immediate disasters and preparing for future challenges. We leveraged USAID resources to secure the commitment of billions of dollars from the private sector to help countries adapt to the changing climate, secured sustainable energy sources for rural communities, and supported partners pursuing urgently needed changes in an era of increasing climate shocks and challenges.

USAID played a leading role in working with countries and communities to expand their resources as they prepared to withstand new climate perils. We more than doubled the number of countries we partner with to tackle the climate crisis—from 45 in 2021, to nearly 100 today. We worked to strengthen developing countries' access to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), helping governments and local organizations secure projects worth hundreds of millions of dollars for climate adaptation and mitigation. We co-led the President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (PREPARE) and launched scores of new efforts to bolster disaster preparedness, respond to drought and food insecurity, and expand access to lifesaving early warning systems for extreme weather events. With less than 5 percent of private-sector climate finance allotted directly toward climate adaptation, we galvanized more than \$3 billion in new adaptation resources under the PREPARE Call to Action to the Private Sector.

More broadly, USAID unlocked more than \$30 billion in outside public and private climate finance, helping countries hold competitive renewable energy auctions, connecting partners with U.S. companies to explore investment opportunities, and partnering with other governments and the private sector to create their own investment windows in climate solutions. We also pursued innovative approaches to dramatically expand the impact of our existing resources, including by helping private investors manage the risks that come with investing in emerging markets. For example, we leveraged \$10 million in funding from USAID and the State Department to seed the \$100 million Green Guarantee Company, which is now positioned to unlock up to \$1 billion in private capital for climate finance in Africa.

Photo by: Women In Fisheries Network For USAID



USAID also answered the call of Americans and people around the world to protect our planet's natural resources. USAID supported partners in more than 50 countries to conserve, restore, and responsibly manage 100 million acres of land and forests—an area almost twice the size of California—at the price of about \$2 per football field's worth of forest. We partnered with more than 60 countries to build reliable, modern energy systems—while helping prevent two tons of harmful greenhouse gas emissions for every dollar that we spent. In total, USAID's clean-energy and forest-conservation investments have helped avoid nearly 380 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions since 2021, as well as a projected 1.3 billion metric tons of future emissions—a combined amount about equal to all U.S. electric power sector emissions in a year. Additionally, recognizing that one of the best opportunities to limit global warming in the near term is by cutting emissions of so-called superpollutants, USAID invested for the first time in reducing methane emissions (which are 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide at warming the planet) by making methane reductions a part of USAID's work in targeted areas such as food loss and waste, natural gas flaring, solid waste management, and rice cultivation.

We complemented this work by accelerating our efforts to end energy poverty in sub-Saharan Africa by expanding energy access and availability. From large-scale utility projects powering urban centers to solar home systems and mini-grids serving unconnected rural communities, over the last four years Power Africa created 27 million new electricity connections in 37 countries that have benefited more than 134 million people across Africa. Through transaction advice and technical assistance, USAID also successfully facilitated the financial close of power deals expected to generate nearly 3,400 new megawatts (MW) of electricity, and the addition of more than 4,400 MW that are already operational, significantly increasing access to energy across Sub-Saharan Africa. Power Africa's collaboration with African governments led to the development of more than 60 laws, policies, and regulations designed to attract investment in the power sector. With an investment of \$392 million in the Power Africa initiative over the past four years, the United States secured more than \$43 billion in commitments from private sector partners.


Spurring Global Health Progress

President Biden took office in the midst of the worst global health crisis in a century—a pandemic that underscored the interconnectedness of our world, as well as the domestic importance of USAID's work to strengthen health systems and reduce health threats that quickly make their way to the United States.

USAID played an essential role in fulfilling the Biden-Harris Administration's commitments to both end the COVID-19 pandemic and become better prepared for another disease outbreak. We coordinated work across eight U.S. government agencies to distribute 688 million vaccine doses to more than 100 countries, following through on President Biden's pledge that the United States would end the global shortage of COVID-19 vaccines. We also launched a new



Hanz Rippe for USAID



Initiative for Global Vaccine Access—Global VAX—focused on facilitating large-scale vaccine delivery around the world, including the most difficult-to-reach places. USAID helped low- and middle-income countries ramp up their public vaccine campaigns and provided essential support for “last-mile” delivery in partner countries experiencing challenges reaching people in rural and marginalized communities.

USAID’s dedicated efforts to expand vaccine availability had a stunning impact. In Tanzania, our support for local efforts increased weekly doses administered from an average of 106,000 per week in January 2022 to one million per week in July and August 2022. A vaccination drive supported by Global VAX in Zambia rapidly secured half a million shots in arms, raising the vaccination rate in the country’s most populous province by 17 percent in two weeks. In Uganda, USAID-supported efforts increased the percentage of eligible Ugandans who had received their first COVID-19 vaccine from 14 percent to 47 percent in just six weeks. Between the launch of Global VAX in December 2021 and June 2023, COVID-19 vaccination rates grew more than six fold (from 5 percent to 33 percent) in the 11 countries where we focused our work.

USAID’s investments in the COVID-19 response not only stemmed the pandemic’s impact and saved countless lives, but also strengthened the capacity of other countries’ health systems to respond to future crises. For example, USAID substantially increased the availability of medical oxygen in more than 50 countries—which is now helping to treat child pneumonia, support safe births and surgeries, and manage symptoms of infectious disease outbreaks. In Ghana, for example, USAID investments to install five oxygen-generating plants, 28 oxygen concentrators, and 10 liquid oxygen plants, now account for 30 percent of the country’s entire medical oxygen supply.

Far beyond leading efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, USAID made critical investments in the capacity of more than 50 countries around the world to prevent future pandemics from spiraling out of control. We created a dedicated Outbreak Response Team and a new Agency-wide coordination structure called the Global Health Emergency Management System to offer faster assistance against emerging health threats. USAID now tracks thousands of outbreak notifications in human and animal populations, and over the course of the Biden-Harris Administration our teams took action to help contain 21 major outbreaks around the world.

These structures have dramatically accelerated the impact of USAID’s response in numerous outbreaks of deadly diseases. For example, viral hemorrhagic fevers—such as Ebola and Marburg—typically demonstrate case fatality rates of 50-90 percent and have repeatedly claimed hundreds to thousands of lives in Africa. But that has not been the case during the past four years, despite 11 such outbreaks. During a 2018 Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the virus circulated for three months before detection and response, resulting in more than 2,200 deaths. But thanks in part to modest, focused investments made by USAID under the Biden-Harris Administration, in 2022 local authorities in the DRC detected Ebola in under 48 hours, with only five deaths registered before it was contained.

Most recently, in September 2024, Rwanda declared its first-ever outbreak of Marburg, a disease with no vaccine or treatment. The Rwandan government acted swiftly, aided by previous U.S. government investments in training and capacity of local health workers and officials, including \$14 million since 2022 from USAID. Over more than a year, USAID had also worked with the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations and others to develop a portfolio of promising vaccines and treatments. The results were groundbreaking: a vaccine trial launched just nine days after the outbreak was declared, vaccinating more than 1,700 Rwandans at the highest risk for exposure; the case fatality rate plummeted to just 23 percent, the lowest recorded to date for Marburg; and the outbreak ended in fewer than three months, with only 66 confirmed Marburg cases and 15 confirmed deaths.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its aftereffects led to a precipitous drop in global life expectancy for the first time in decades and decimated primary health systems. In response, USAID launched a new global health effort to build and strengthen primary health care systems and better support health care workers. To encourage the systemic changes that better prepare us to take on all diseases, we set an ambitious goal to work with partner governments to improve survival rates for all people under 50, including children under 5, to better than pre-pandemic rates by 2025.

As part of this effort we launched our Primary Impact Initiative, a partnership with governments to build more capable primary health workforces. For example, in Kenya, our development diplomacy encouraged the government to commit to financing and equipping 108,000 community health workers. USAID supported their training and integration into multidisciplinary primary health care teams in 25 of the country's 47 counties. We invested in the Global Financing Facility (GFF), which provides catalytic funding and technical assistance to help countries develop their own national health strategies and enlists World Bank financing to implement them. Every dollar we and other donors invested in the GFF connected partner governments with \$7 more in financing from the World Bank.

With the pandemic imperiling malaria control and elimination efforts, resulting in a significant increase in malaria deaths globally, the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) played a critical role in supporting local and national efforts that returned malaria death rates in partner countries to pre-pandemic levels. Over the past four years, PMI delivered more than 130 million insecticide-treated nets to partner countries, protecting 88 million people on average each year from one of the world's deadliest diseases, and it delivered more than 350 million rapid malaria tests and 250 million malaria treatments, providing countries with the critical tools to support healthy and thriving communities. PMI also committed more than \$100 million to support 100,000 community health workers in improving both the quality and reach of primary health care—another investment in strengthening countries' abilities to prevent, detect, and respond to disease outbreaks that will pay dividends for the United States and partners long into the future.

USAID teams helped six countries eliminate neglected tropical disease as a public health problem over the past four years and supported the historic rollout of the world's first malaria vaccines to children across 18 countries so far. Through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), USAID also continued advancing U.S. efforts to treat and support people living with HIV, prevent new infections, and save lives. By the end of the Biden-Harris Administration, PEPFAR had saved an estimated 26 million lives and helped 7.8 million babies be born without HIV across more than 55 countries. USAID worked to bolster the reach of our HIV prevention, testing, and treatment efforts through close collaboration with partner-country governments and communities, and in 2024 we supported local health providers to treat 7.4 million people living with HIV and initiate nearly 1.2 million people on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), or medication to prevent HIV—reflecting a 151 percent increase from the start of the Biden-Harris Administration. USAID also supported the launch and delivery of long-acting cabotegravir in five countries, making available for the first time in Africa an injectable shot that protects against HIV and is only needed every two months.



USAID/Tanzania

Supporting Women and Girls

President Biden outlined an ambitious global agenda for supporting women and girls in the first-ever National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality, recognizing that this work is “essential to economic growth and development, democracy and political stability, and the security of nations across the globe.” To deliver on this vision, USAID committed to doubling our gender equality and women’s empowerment work. We achieved this goal in 2023 through a historic investment of \$2.6 billion in USAID and State Department programming focused on unlocking and expanding the potential of women and girls—half of the world’s population. Importantly, we fulfilled this commitment not by cutting back on other work, but by investing in gender equality across sectors and integrating attention to women and girls throughout our programming. We complemented these efforts by significantly expanding technical expertise across Missions and Bureaus, emphasizing that advancing gender equality is a shared Agency responsibility.

Over the past four years, we reached tens of millions of girls and women with education assistance; maternal and child health programming and voluntary family planning services; and programs to increase access to economic resources including assets, credit, income, and employment. In the farming sector, where closing gender gaps would add an estimated \$1 trillion to global GDP and significantly reduce food insecurity, we invested close to \$450 million through the Generating Resilience and Opportunities for Women (GROW) initiative—helping millions of women agricultural producers acquire new technologies and enabling women and women-owned businesses to access more than \$234 million in agriculture-related financing. And in 2022, we helped establish an ambitious partnership to support access to quality, affordable childcare, which is now increasing women’s economic opportunity and early childhood development in 28 countries, having mobilized \$500 million in projected funding from a range of donors.

We also made women and girls central to our efforts to support democratic renewal, including through our largest-ever investment in women’s political participation and leadership in Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire, Ecuador, Fiji, Honduras, Kenya, the Kyrgyz Republic, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Yemen. In Côte d’Ivoire, USAID-supported efforts helped to double the percentage of women holding local council seats from 15 percent to 30 percent in 2023. In Tanzania,

Photo by USAID






USAID supported civil-society organizations as they helped secure ratification of a 2024 law that criminalized acts of violence against women in elections and politics—making Tanzania the first country in Africa to recognize this as a crime. Through the flagship Gender Equity and Equality Action Fund, USAID and the State Department invested \$500 million in efforts such as assisting women in obtaining legally recognized land rights, expanding digital skills, and securing better-paying jobs, building on the efforts begun under the prior administration. And we worked to advance women's leadership in rapidly growing green and blue industries—such as clean energy, fisheries, waste recycling, and forest management, including by playing a leading role in launching the Women in the Sustainable Economy (WISE) Initiative, which has mobilized more than \$2 billion from governments, private-sector companies, foundations, civil society, and multilateral organizations to support women working in environmentally sustainable sectors.

Enhancing Economic Resilience, Prosperity, and Digital Progress

With countries around the world facing growing risks to economic stability and security, including mounting debt levels, inflation, sluggish growth, decreased investment, and economic coercion, USAID responded with a new Economic Resilience (ER) initiative that deployed nearly \$100 million to help countries manage debt, create more jobs, and bolster critical supply chains. In Ecuador, for example, ER funds provided technical assistance to the government to apply for concessional finance from the IMF, with less than half a million dollars of investment from USAID potentially making available up to \$1.3 billion in financing at favorable below-market terms—a lifeline for an important partner that is currently navigating twin economic and security crises. Similarly, in Ghana, ER funds enabled USAID to help the country meet structural reform benchmarks that will unlock more than \$1 billion in concessional finance from the IMF, World Bank, and African Development Bank over the next two years. And in Angola, ER has aligned with the U.S. government's Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment's (PGI) Lobito Trans-Africa economic corridor, building on U.S. investments in a railway link that will facilitate the export of critical minerals from the region. ER will expand the share of the population that benefits from these infrastructure investments. To enhance the United States' role in the \$400 billion critical mineral industry, as well as shore up U.S. energy supply chains and energy independence, USAID also developed the first Clean Energy and Critical Minerals Industrial Strategic Approach, which identified more than 100 potential clean energy infrastructure projects for U.S. government financing.

Through Prosper Africa, which catalyzes two-way trade and investment flows, USAID led U.S. government efforts to strengthen the strategic and economic partnership between the United States and countries in Africa. Since the start of the Biden-Harris Administration, the U.S. government and Prosper Africa initiative facilitated 1,885 private-sector deals, valued at more than \$74 billion, in 42 African countries—directly supporting the creation of jobs for American and African workers, enabling U.S. businesses to enter and expand in new markets and increase their supply-chain resilience, and providing American and African consumers direct benefits from increased trade. In Kenya, for example, Prosper Africa and USAID collaborated to develop one of the largest environmentally sustainable housing portfolios in Africa, leveraging a \$180 million loan from the DFC to catalyze another \$700 million in local Kenyan investment. Prosper Africa and USAID also worked together to create the Catalytic Investment Facility, which provides first-loss and operational funding support to African asset managers to facilitate investments into African tech startups.

As emerging technologies reshape every facet of society, USAID established a new independent Office of Digital Technology (ODT) and worked to help partners around the world harness technology's potential to improve lives while mitigating the associated risks. In a competitive geostrategic landscape, USAID worked to advance secure,



interoperable, and open alternatives to digital authoritarianism while addressing the distinct needs of development partners in their digital transformations. As one example, we supported the expansion of Open RAN, which enables firms to design, build, and operate wireless networks using solutions from diverse sources as an alternative to closed systems. Since its 2022 launch, the Asia O-RAN Academy has trained more than 10,000 network engineers and is now establishing the Philippines' first O-RAN 5G interoperability lab, fostering innovation and workforce development.

Working with the White House, USAID launched the Counter Ransomware Initiative (CRI) Fund, which aims to address significant gaps in cybersecurity capabilities in low-and-middle-income countries. By strengthening national capacities and building resilience, the CRI Fund helped prevent global cyber risks from affecting economies and critical services worldwide. ODT will manage the CRI Fund and be responsible for collecting contributions from CRI's 68 member countries and organizations, coordinating with CRI leadership when requests for support are submitted, and facilitating the delivery of capacity building.

Through the Digital Invest Initiative we helped extend the reach of technology so that communities are not left behind as the world digitizes. Since 2022, Digital Invest partners have invested in more than 60 technology companies across 38 countries that are working on efforts including expanding broadband connectivity in Liberia and developing a digital payment platform in Uzbekistan. USAID also launched the Women in the Digital Economy Fund (WiDEF), a joint effort between USAID and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to accelerate progress on closing the gender digital divide.

As advances in artificial intelligence (AI) demonstrated the potential to reshape economies, we collaborated with the Department of State to develop a U.S. government-wide “AI in Global Development Playbook” and a “Global AI Research Agenda.” USAID also created the Agency's first AI Action Plan to guide responsible engagement with AI in our programming and launched an Agency AI Task Team to rapidly accelerate partnerships, identify strategies to positively shape global AI governance, and determine where USAID's programmatic investments will make the greatest impact.

Advancing Food Security

As the world faced harsher growing conditions, less predictable weather, and a constellation of other shocks resulting from climate change and conflict, USAID accelerated efforts to reduce malnutrition, fight hunger, and spur agricultural innovation during the Biden-Harris Administration. With our foundational commitments and partnerships to combat global hunger through the longstanding Feed the Future initiative, USAID reaches tens of millions of people around the world every year with food security and nutrition investments—and has documented declines of between 20 and 25 percent in poverty, hunger, and malnutrition since 2012 in the places where Feed the Future has worked. Building on this progress, we pursued reforms to make these efforts even more effective and sustainable, combining our programming and expertise on food security, environment, water, and energy into the new Bureau for Resilience, Environment, and Food Security.

Faced with a global food security crisis in 2022—caused by a combination of the pandemic, lowered crop yields in the Horn of Africa amid unprecedented drought, and Russia's invasion of one of the world's top exporters of wheat and corn—USAID provided historically high levels of emergency food aid to impacted communities, urgently deploying the significant supplemental resources provided by Congress. In addition, with food and fertilizer prices soaring to all-time highs, USAID used development assistance to surge seeds, fertilizer, and targeted market-based

assistance to help feed communities in need and protect food production from plummeting even further. At the same time, our teams around the world mobilized other development partners to increase the scale of their assistance and pursued key policy changes as part of U.S. efforts to stabilize prices. We encouraged partners to end fertilizer and food-export bans and minimize trade disruptions, pushed international financial institutions to scale their own responses, and worked with fertilizer companies to maintain access to their products for smallholder farmers. While food insecurity remains too high, with an estimated 733 million people chronically hungry in 2023, the investments made by the United States—including more than \$1 billion in supplemental funding provided by Congress for Feed the Future between 2022 and 2024—helped shore up food systems and prevent a devastating crisis from devolving to the worst-case scenarios that appeared possible at the height of the emergency in 2022.

Critically, in 2024, USAID shifted food security resources to better prioritize a smaller number of the most promising agricultural economies, launching the new Feed the Future Accelerator in Malawi, Tanzania, and Zambia. In these countries the Accelerator is harnessing the combination of fertile land, diverse farming systems, and government willingness to undertake reforms to support the creation of a regional breadbasket. USAID's \$76 million in targeted investment is projected to sharply increase agricultural yields in these countries, add hundreds of millions of dollars to their GDPs, and help lift hundreds of thousands of people out of poverty. We also worked to crowd in new investments from the private sector that aligned with visions laid out by these governments and the African Union, resulting in more than \$150 million in new private sector commitments to date. Through this targeted set of investments, USAID is helping Malawi, Tanzania, and Zambia work toward becoming net food exporters, ultimately supporting needs across Africa and decreasing reliance on international food assistance.

We also seized opportunities to evolve USAID's broader approach to agriculture, including what is grown (focusing on climate-resilient seeds and more nutrient-dense foods), how farmers and producers grow it (emphasizing more sustainable practices), and who benefits from our work and investments (expanding partnerships with women-owned businesses and designing programs that better reach underserved communities). For example, agricultural small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are Africa's largest employer and economic engine, forming the

Morgana Wingard for USAID



backbone of agrifood systems in Africa. Yet three out of four African agri-SMEs cannot access formal bank loans but are too large for microfinance, contributing to an estimated \$100 billion gap in financing. In 2023, USAID and the Government of Norway announced the Financing Agricultural Small-and-Medium Enterprises in Africa Fund (FASA) to spur investment in Africa's agricultural growth. With commitments to date totalling \$70 million from the United States, Norway, South Korea, and the UK, FASA has the potential to support nearly 60,000 private-sector jobs and 1.5 million smallholder farmers. More broadly, women make up nearly half of the agricultural workforce in low-income countries globally, but face barriers in accessing the same training, resources, and land as their male counterparts. Research shows that addressing systemic challenges that disadvantage women in the agrifood sector could lift up to 45 million people out of hunger. So we worked to focus more of our food and agriculture resources on this population, and we increased direct support to women and girls by more than 160 percent during the Biden-Harris Administration.

Responding to Humanitarian Crises

Over the course of the Biden-Harris Administration, USAID responded to more than 177 humanitarian crises in 94 countries and delivered more than \$40 billion in humanitarian aid on behalf of the American people.


These efforts included a range of responses to some of the worst natural disasters in the world. After devastating flooding in 2022 left one-third of Pakistan under water, USAID worked with the Department of Defense to airlift 630 metric tons of relief commodities to flood-affected populations. After two earthquakes hit Syria and Türkiye in February 2023—the worst earthquakes to hit the region in nearly a century—USAID led the United States in responding, sending more than 200 staff in support of search-and-rescue operations and providing lifesaving assistance to people in both countries.

USAID also led U.S. government responses to a range of conflicts, wars, and protracted crises in countries including Haiti, Ethiopia, Yemen, Syria, and Afghanistan. Amid significant challenges and rising numbers of people around the world requiring humanitarian assistance, Gaza and Sudan emerged as two of the most difficult humanitarian crises to occur during the four years of the Biden-Harris Administration.

Since Hamas' horrific October 7, 2023 terror attack in Israel, teams at USAID worked around the clock to address the devastating humanitarian crisis in Gaza that followed the outbreak of war between Israel and Hamas. This war resulted in the displacement of nearly two million Palestinians, with tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians killed in the fighting. The suffering in Gaza remained staggering throughout the conflict—with nearly the entire population in need of food assistance and some facing potential famine, more than 80 percent of the population living in tents or makeshift shelters, and the vast majority lacking access to clean water and medical care for months. Gaza also became one of the most dangerous conflicts for humanitarian workers, with hundreds of aid workers killed throughout the war. Despite these dire circumstances, USAID's teams remained committed to finding ways to help civilians and support humanitarians.



Photo by Fida Hussain for AFP



Over the course of the conflict, humanitarianians from across the Agency joined USAID teams working from our West Bank and Gaza, Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon Missions to support U.S. efforts focused on urgently increasing the flow of humanitarian assistance into Gaza, advocating for greater protections for civilians, and helping advance diplomacy to end the war and secure the release of hostages held by Hamas. Our teams worked tirelessly to coordinate and improve the safe passage of food, medicine, shelter, and other commodities into Gaza—including by securing the opening of new land crossings and routes inside Gaza, supporting crucial coordination cells to help facilitate aid worker movements, advocating for standard operating procedures at checkpoints, addressing customs restrictions and obstacles delaying humanitarian commodities from reaching civilians, and working to mitigate the impact of rising gang violence and insecurity affecting the delivery of food and other assistance. USAID also supported the establishment and management of two field hospitals that have performed over 8,600 surgeries, and more than 900 reconstructive procedures, as well as more than 1,300 caesarean section deliveries. Overall, since the October 7 attack, the U.S. provided over \$2.1 billion in humanitarian assistance in Gaza, the West Bank, and neighboring countries.

USAID has a long history of leading humanitarian efforts in Sudan, and when civil war erupted in April 2023, we again led global efforts to reach the Sudanese people with lifesaving assistance. As we moved food, medicine, therapeutic feeding, and other commodities to the region, the principal challenge for the humanitarian response, as in Gaza, was securing consistent and sufficient access to the most vulnerable populations, including civilians facing Famine conditions. These conditions developed as a result of a vicious conflict and extensive atrocities perpetrated by both the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), and in January 2025, the United States determined that the RSF and allied militias had committed genocide in Sudan and imposed sanctions on RSF and SAF leadership. Throughout the conflict, USAID worked to reach people in need, including by leading humanitarian diplomacy efforts—engaging directly with the SAF, RSF, partners in the region, and the donor community—to expand cross-line and cross-border access. USAID helped secure humanitarian breakthroughs, including cross-border access from Chad to Darfur, commitments from Sudanese authorities for a humanitarian corridor from Port Sudan to desperate populations in Khartoum, and a steady expansion of the UN's presence and UN humanitarian flights to accelerate the flow of relief to previously inaccessible areas. Since 2023, the U.S. government has provided more than \$2.3 billion in humanitarian assistance for Sudan and neighboring countries hosting Sudanese refugees. In addition to supporting UN humanitarian agencies and our NGO partners, USAID also supported the many Sudanese organizations—including women's associations, youth organizations, and grassroots mutual aid groups—providing critical frontline care in areas devastated by conflict.

The rising number of humanitarian crises unfolding around the world required USAID to refine and enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of our approach to assistance. Our Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance developed a new strategic focus on strengthening governments' capacities to better manage disasters in their countries through providing training for local first responders, conducting risk-mapping exercises with local communities, and developing evacuation plans, among other tools. In addition, USAID championed investments in technologies such as new early warning systems for extreme weather events, including more than \$80 million in an Early Warnings for All Initiative that helps local actors in partner countries better anticipate natural disasters before they hit.

USAID worked closely with UNICEF, WFP, and WHO to secure new global guidelines to better harness limited resources to prevent and treat child malnutrition, while USAID leadership helped convene other donors in 2022 to raise a record amount of global funding for ready-to-use therapeutic food to address child wasting, reaching 35 percent more children with malnutrition support in 2023 compared to prior years. With the Department of State's

Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), USAID renewed focus on holding humanitarian partners accountable for promoting women’s leadership and prioritizing violence prevention and survivor support at every phase of a given crisis—and in response to increasingly horrific incidences of sexual violence in conflict, we doubled the percentage of our humanitarian budget allocated to protecting children and responding to gender-based violence.

Reforming USAID to Become More Inclusive and Efficient


To make progress on behalf of the American people, we need to work differently. We recognized that it is not sufficient to enhance the inclusivity of our policies and programs—we needed to make long-overdue changes to our workforce that would better support USAID’s ambitious global efforts and make our Agency more effective and more efficient. Over the past four years we have grown and strengthened our teams in unprecedented ways. We have modernized our work and equipped USAID with new tools that enhance the impact we can achieve with taxpayer resources.

Strengthening USAID’s Workforce

USAID’s global workforce of almost 14,000 people is one of America’s strongest foreign policy assets. Across the more than 100 countries where we work, our team is often the face of the United States and plays an essential role in helping the U.S. government and our partners respond to the most difficult challenges in the world. Under our One USAID approach, we’ve grown and modernized our global workforce, undertaking a series of long-overdue reforms to better support our team, tackling structural disparities in the treatment of staff and initiating far-reaching changes to make USAID more inclusive, accessible, and fit for purpose.

Photo by USAID





To be effective and responsible stewards of taxpayer resources—and to enable USAID to represent the best of America in the world—we made significant investments in growing and strengthening our workforce. After decades of increasing overreliance on the use of contractors, we committed to transitioning a significant number of contract positions to direct hire. To that end, we created more than 900 new federal employee positions over two years—representing the single biggest increase in USAID’s direct hire workforce this century. We transformed how we staff our crisis-response operations—this staff was historically hired as contractors, so we worked with Congress to secure authority to directly hire term-limited employees for responding to and preventing foreign crises in our health, humanitarian, and conflict prevention Bureaus. We also delivered on our commitment to build a workforce that is representative of America, recruiting and hiring the most diverse Foreign Service classes in USAID’s history and doubling the number of Donald M. Payne Fellows—new Foreign Service Officers who come from historically underrepresented backgrounds—that we hired annually.

We also took action to address inequities faced by many contract staff regarding their benefits and to promote equity among all colleagues—regardless of the hiring authority that brought them to the Agency. As part of these efforts, we implemented significant benefits for U.S. Personal Services Contractors including paid parental leave, relocation assistance, and aligning their compensation with the Foreign Service Officers they serve alongside abroad. We fully transitioned to paid internships across the Agency and continued to grow our suite of internship offerings, including a new career internship program designed to retain talented interns and support recruitment into competitive Civil Service positions. And we established USAID’s first-ever Disability Resources Center to better support and empower colleagues with disabilities and help the workplace better reflect their needs and lived experiences.

We instituted changes to how members of our Civil Service and Foreign Service are evaluated on their performance and considered for promotions, in part through developing a more comprehensive set of competencies and skills relevant to advancing USAID’s mission that include private-sector engagement abilities and progress on advancing inclusive, locally led work. We enhanced leadership development and professional training for Foreign Service Officers at all stages of their careers. We improved USAID’s organizational resiliency in the face of the growing number of conflicts and crises that affect our teams, better equipping staff for responding to emergencies through the development of detailed continuity plans. And, consistent with the Biden-Harris Administration’s commitment to closing gender and racial wage gaps, we updated our policies to ensure that USAID no longer considers an individual’s pay history when determining salary for our new employees.

We also emphasized the importance of bringing more diverse voices and expertise to the table as we work to tackle development challenges. Since 2021, we signed seven new agreements with Minority-Serving Institutions such as Tuskegee University, Fayetteville State University, the University of Guam, Florida International University, and Delaware State University. These relationships have already helped facilitate opportunities and engagements with thousands of students and faculty.

USAID’s Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) workforce is critical in the design, development, and implementation of USAID’s activities, managing 85 percent of the Agency’s global funding through contracts and awards. Yet as USAID’s budgets and programs have grown—from \$14 billion in 2013 to \$38 billion in 2023—the A&A workforce has not increased proportionally. So we launched a focused effort, A&A Accelerate, to rebuild this capacity by recruiting more than 30 new staff; streamlining award development and implementation; increasing automation; and increasing A&A capacity in Missions by enabling more local staff to take part in this work.

Empowering Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs)

Through our FSN Empowerment initiative, USAID fostered an unprecedented shift in the Agency's practices, policies, and culture in support of our more than 5,000 overseas local staff around the world. FSNs constitute the majority of USAID's overseas workforce and advance both the Agency's work and critical foreign policy objectives through their diverse experience and deep knowledge of local contexts.

Over the past four years, we initiated a series of changes to better reflect the immense value that FSNs bring to USAID, and to position them as equal partners in the work of the Agency. We more than doubled the number of FSNs receiving fellowships to work at USAID's headquarters in Washington, where they helped drive progress on core Agency priorities, and we tripled the number of fellowships available in the range of countries where USAID works, enabling FSNs to bring their experiences to other Missions around the world. We started requiring that FSNs be part of interview panels for roles at the Missions where they serve, and we mandated that Mission readiness planning specifically account for the needs and experiences of FSNs and their families during crises—part of our commitment to increase transparency and make resources and tools available specifically for helping equip FSNs to be advocates for their needs and priorities. When crises have occurred, we prioritized context-specific options so that FSNs would have as much flexibility and resources as possible during those times. And we worked closely with the State Department to make FSN compensation and benefits more predictable, more equitable, and more transparent.

Many FSNs spend decades—some more than 30 or even 40 years—working with the U.S. government, yet they have long faced a number of obstacles to career growth. We eliminated barriers that have historically prevented FSNs from accessing opportunities for career advancement, including by creating more than 115 new FSN leadership positions in our overseas Missions; increasing the number of the most senior-level positions for local staff (known as FSN-13 positions) by 70 percent and the number of Deputy Office Director roles for FSNs by 200 percent; and, so far, equipping more than a quarter of our Missions with FSNs serving as senior advisors in the Mission's leadership team.

For years, many FSNs had not sought formal promotions even as they took on significant new responsibilities because doing so would have required a complicated process that often involved having to compete for the job they were already doing. So, we changed the contracting rules to make it easier for FSNs to be recognized for their actual work and to be promoted without having to put their jobs at risk. We reformed the Agency's policies to ensure that FSNs were not limited in their abilities to grow professionally because of bureaucratic requirements: for example, we made it possible for FSNs to substitute professional experience for formal education when seeking a promotion. And we trained some 60 FSNs as certified coaches who can support other FSNs—and the overall USAID workforce—in reaching their full professional potential.



Photo by USAID/Nepal

Supporting Our Afghan Staff

Over 20 years beginning in 2001, many at USAID either worked in, or in support of, Afghanistan, helping the country produce dramatic improvements in the lives of the Afghan people. When Kabul fell to the Taliban in August 2021, all of USAID's Afghan staff who wanted to leave the country were able to depart on evacuation flights with their eligible immediate family. Nevertheless, many had to make the excruciating decision to leave extended family members behind, including adult children and parents. To support these families as well as the efforts of the U.S. government's Operation Enduring Welcome, USAID established a task force with a focus on reuniting extended families, providing refugee referrals for thousands of employees of USAID's grantees in Afghanistan, assisting in the provision of Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) for employees of USAID's contractors, and serving as a resource on refugee and immigration matters for USAID staff and FSNs. This task force helped hundreds of USAID family members located in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and third countries move through complex and separate U.S. refugee, immigration, and relocation systems. USAID is the only federal Agency or Department to have launched a new training and employment program for its former Afghan staff, and through this program we are training 20 former FSNs from our Afghanistan Mission to become certified federal contracting professionals, a civil service role that is understaffed throughout the federal workforce.

Investing in American Expertise

USAID made important investments at home as part of the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to growing the U.S. economy and spurring American innovation. Over the course of the Administration, USAID directed more than \$4 billion in resources to U.S. small businesses; set and exceeded Agency-wide goals every year for the percentage of contracts awarded to U.S. small businesses; and prioritized efforts to increase our partnerships with both minority-owned and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned small businesses (SDVOSB). As a result, we more than doubled our obligations to SDVOSBs from 2023 to 2024.

We leveraged the United States' capabilities and expertise as one of the world's agricultural powerhouses by forging partnerships with U.S. farmers, universities, and companies. Our Feed the Future Innovation Labs worked with American universities and other U.S. institutions across 42 states, and facilitated important collaborations with a range of developing country research institutions. For example, the Idaho-based J.R. Simplot Company partnered with Michigan State University, the International Potato Center, and the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) to develop locally preferred potato varieties that are resistant to Potato Late Blight. The new varieties have shown near-total protection against this devastating disease and will soon be reviewed by Kenyan regulatory authorities for release, with similar work also underway in Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Nigeria.



Photo by USAID

Making USAID Programs More Cost-Effective

In 2023, we created an independent Office of the Chief Economist (OCE) with dedicated resources and staff. We charged OCE with leading efforts to improve the “cost-effectiveness”—the impact per dollar—of USAID’s programming, as well as improving our ability to rapidly support partner countries in responding to daunting economic headwinds, like high inflation and spiraling debt burdens. We explored existing and new sources of data from the global evidence base and drew on the best available insights to prioritize development approaches that more consistently deliver greater impact per dollar than others. As part of our efforts, we issued new Agency position papers on cost-effectiveness—articulating USAID’s commitment to achieving the greatest possible impact per dollar of taxpayer resources spent through the use and generation of evidence—and on direct monetary transfers, detailing principles and best practices for how USAID can leverage transfers to individuals, households, and microenterprises as a highly cost-effective approach to achieve a range of development objectives. We also launched a new platform with the Center for Effective Global Action at the University of California, Berkeley to tap some of the world’s leading experts in cost-effectiveness evidence to support our staff and partners. In under two years, we have already improved the cost-effectiveness of more than \$1.5 billion in USAID programming and built a global network across USAID Missions of “Cost-Effectiveness Evidence Champions.” And with OCE in the lead, we have also reinvigorated USAID’s economic expertise, including by creating a Macroeconomic Support Team and by hiring the largest cohort of economists into the Foreign Service in more than a decade.

Reducing Burdens and Modernizing How We Work

Inefficient processes undermine the U.S. government’s effectiveness, increase costs, cause delays, damage relationships, and ultimately make it harder to achieve important development objectives. We launched an Agency-wide burden reduction effort to cut internal bureaucracy, improve efficiency, and better serve U.S. taxpayers, as well as reduce burdens on USAID’s external partners. Through this effort, we eliminated more than four million hours of burdensome processes for our workforce from November 2022 to October 2023 as well as simplified the experience of engaging with USAID for our partners.

With a commitment to leveraging relationships across the U.S. government to advance reforms beyond USAID’s direct control, we made long-desired inroads on cutting additional bureaucratic burdens. For example, USAID worked closely with the Department of State to streamline the strategic and budget planning process for PEPFAR, eliminating some 670,000 hours of work every year by changing the Country Operational Plan cycle from annual to every two years, and setting budgets at the headquarters level so that Mission teams can devote more time to engaging local partners in serving people living with and affected by HIV. USAID also worked closely with the Office of Management and Budget to reduce administrative burdens for applicants and recipients of U.S. government funds, directly responding to challenges highlighted by both U.S. and local organizations.

Sustained attention on burden reduction also enabled us to identify and elevate individuals’ innovative efforts and scale them up to the enterprise level. For example, our Office of the Chief Information Officer scaled up a technical solution by an entrepreneurial employee to automate the shepherding of documents through approval queues. Most critically, USAID built on longstanding efforts across many administrations to create a culture of continuous process improvement by empowering the workforce to share feedback about processes, getting input from end-users on the best solutions, and recognizing and rewarding members of the workforce for the improvements they made.

Making USAID More Catalytic and Delivering Progress Beyond Programs

Faced with growing challenges from strategic competitors along with a widening gap between the scale of needs and the public resources available to address them, we made taxpayer resources go further than ever before, brought in new partners, found new ways to reach the most marginalized and vulnerable communities, and improved how USAID engaged people around the world.


Driving Development Diplomacy and Progress Beyond Programs

To support USAID's workforce in undertaking development diplomacy, we encouraged teams to draw on technical expertise and country-level experience to bring contextual understanding, development perspectives, and our values as an Agency to foreign policy and national security deliberations. We embraced our role within the U.S. government as the actor most connected to local communities and diverse populations, and we leveraged substantial American contributions to many multilateral forums and institutions to spur action on pressing development objectives.

Photo by USAID



Childhood Lead Poisoning: One in two children in low- and middle-income countries has elevated blood lead levels posing serious health risks. Lead is toxic to the brain and cardiovascular system and causes an estimated 20 percent of the educational gap between high- and low-income countries. Around the world, lead poisoning is responsible for more deaths per year than malaria and HIV/AIDS combined. Despite the magnitude of this crisis, until 2024, global spending on lead only amounted to roughly \$15 million a year. In 2024, USAID galvanized the global community to establish the Partnership for a Lead-Free Future (PLF), a first-of-its kind public-private partnership aiming to end lead poisoning in low- and middle-income countries by 2040. Backed with an initial



\$150 million—10 times the previous annual level of funding—provided primarily from private philanthropy, the PLF includes 29 countries that have committed to accelerate actions to prevent lead poisoning. USAID Missions across the world are now supporting country-led plans for lead detection, source investigation, control through stronger policies and regulatory enforcement, and derisking of private sector transitions to lead-free alternatives or lead-safe operations. Since USAID began its development diplomacy, six countries have committed to lead paint bans, and 12 countries—with a combined population of more than one billion—have begun planning to conduct blood lead level surveys so they can identify clusters of lead poisoning and begin getting rid of the lead that is causing it. And working with key diplomatic partners around the world, we secured the first-ever language in G20 and G7 Development Communiqués that clearly stated the need to reduce lead exposure.

New and Catalytic Collaboration: We established a trilateral collaboration with Japan and the Republic of Korea, hosting the first-ever Trilateral Development and Humanitarian Assistance Policy Dialogue after President Biden's historic Camp David Summit in August 2023. Through this collaboration, the United States, Japan, and the Republic of Korea worked together to strengthen health in Ghana and the Philippines and to expand energy access and support youth entrepreneurship across Africa. USAID also expanded strategic engagement with philanthropic organizations, establishing new partnerships with foundations and signing multiple memoranda of understanding with groups including the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, the Skoll Foundation, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation to advance locally led development, strengthen global health, and improve research and evidence generation. In Tanzania, USAID partnered with the Vodafone Foundation to expand access to a low-cost emergency transportation service to facilitate safe and quick transit of expecting mothers to health care facilities. The service has reduced maternal and newborn deaths by 25 percent in communities where it has been deployed, and USAID is now working with a coalition of foundations and local partners to bring this lifesaving system to Malawi and Kenya. We also invested in expanding religious engagement, launching our first-ever Agency policy on this work in 2023 and expanding the tools available for Missions to integrate partnerships with faith-based organizations and religious actors across our work.

Multilateral Development Bank (MDB) Reform: USAID promoted and supported MDB reform to better equip these critical development finance institutions to address today's increasingly complex global challenges, including climate change, pandemic preparedness, and conflict, violence, and extremism. Working with the U.S. Treasury Department, we elevated development perspectives in policy discussions with international financial institutions (IFIs) and strengthened our collaboration with IFIs on the ground. For example, in Bangladesh, we leveraged USAID's knowledge of local labor markets to help the World Bank adapt \$700 million in projects to better promote skilling and job opportunities for Rohingya refugees. USAID advanced policy proposals for the World Bank evolution and the International Development Association's 21st replenishment processes (IDA21) that contributed to, for example, greater focus on economically integrating internally displaced persons, addressing the harms of extreme heat, and leveraging nongovernmental partners to deliver support in fragile and conflict-affected settings. USAID technical experts informed the design of the new corporate scorecard that will measure World Bank performance across key result areas by crafting more outcome-oriented indicators for food and nutrition security, digitization, and primary health care. And at the country level, USAID launched pilots with the IMF and World Bank to advance collaboration on shared priorities in an initial set of 15 countries.

Extreme Heat: Following record-breaking heatwaves across the world, USAID brought together more than 2,000 global leaders to share local low-cost ways of addressing extreme heat. We built on decade-old tools to create new Heat Exposure Projection Maps that will help USAID Missions and partners plan for extreme heat events in the near and long term. And we partnered with the Treasury Department to engage the global financial sector,

including to increase and improve programing for extreme heat across regional multilateral development banks, sign an agreement with the GCF to strengthen cooperation and coordination on extreme heat, and, in partnership with the World Meteorological Organization and ClimateWorks, secure commitments of \$50 million from a dozen foundations to mitigate the effects of extreme heat.

Countering the PRC

The Biden-Harris Administration's U.S. Global Development Strategy underscores that the PRC "presents unique and unprecedented challenges to U.S. national security interests and development and humanitarian priorities around the world." In response, USAID expanded its PRC and strategic competition work and launched an Agency-wide strategy focused on elevating our affirmative development agenda.

With the Department of State, USAID co-managed the Countering PRC Influence Fund (CPIF), which has positioned USAID to offer partners who are launching significant development projects an alternative to the often exploitative, coercive, and debt-inducing PRC model. Through CPIF, USAID has supported infrastructure projects like undersea cables and established a Transaction Advisory Fund (TAF) in the Indo-Pacific, a rapid-response tool that can respond to partner requests for assistance with infrastructure transactions. CPIF has also worked to advance transparency, labor rights, and the rule of law by helping partners counter illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing and conducting research on Uyghur forced labor.

USAID also expanded its presence in key regions of strategic competition, including in the Pacific Islands and Angola. USAID re-established a Mission in Fiji and elevated USAID's presence in Papua New Guinea to a Country Representative Office. We supported Tibetan communities inside and outside the PRC, with a focus on livelihood development, natural resource conservation, and cultural resilience programs in the Tibet Autonomous Region. Separately, USAID's humanitarian work helped bolster Taiwan's civilian emergency resilience capabilities in the case of a crisis.



Photo by USAID

Partnering with the Private Sector

Recognizing that private enterprise is necessary to create and sustain development impact at the scale of our greatest challenges, we launched the Private-Sector Engagement Modernize series of reforms to ensure that USAID can move at the speed of private-sector innovation and better facilitate public-private partnership. We deepened our pool of private-sector expertise, formalizing private-sector advisors in more than 100 Operating Units and empowering private-sector leads to identify and advance the most strategic partnerships at both the company and industry levels. We created the Agency's first enterprise relationship management platform, COMPASS, designed

to foster long-term, impactful partnerships. And we launched the EDGE Fund, which has provided \$150 million in flexible and catalytic resources over the past three years to generate more than \$1 billion in private-sector commitments through the types of partnerships we know generate the most outsized impact—those that leverage core business capabilities and comparative advantages toward tackling development challenges.

These efforts have helped USAID seize opportunities that are highly complementary to traditional development and humanitarian assistance. They have allowed us to not just procure lifesaving ready-to-use therapeutic food to fight extreme hunger; but also position a Kenyan manufacturer to expand its production and reach 500,000 more children; to not just help Ukrainian hospitals treat those injured in the war; but also help create Ukraine's own prosthetics industry; to not just equip Ghanaian farmers with the tools and knowledge to use fertilizer more effectively in the midst of an affordability crisis, but mobilize fertilizer companies to offer products to geographies that otherwise would have no access. They have helped us mobilize investment capital for internet services in traditionally excluded consumer populations and, over the past two years, reach more than 15 million consumers in 40 countries and create over 15,000 new jobs. They have helped us partner with members of the U.S.-Pakistani diaspora in the aftermath of the devastating 2022 floods, mobilizing almost \$200 million in private investments in diverse sectors including health, AI, and semiconductor chip manufacturing.

Overall, since 2021, USAID executed 776 new partnerships unlocking \$2.25 billion in private investments in more than 100 countries—with private-sector contributions to USAID activities increasing by 42 percent from the beginning of the Biden-Harris Administration. With over 166 active U.S.-based partners today, including 23 Fortune 500 companies, USAID's growing portfolio delivered for development needs while also supporting American business. And crucially, these partnerships did more than just maximize the impact of U.S. taxpayer dollars. By demonstrating the commercial viability for businesses to create jobs and deliver programs that were once donor-led—as many of our partnerships aim to achieve—they paved the way for sustainable, market-driven solutions that reduce reliance on donor support.



Photo by USAID

USAID also mobilized private capital for key U.S. development objectives through our close collaboration with the DFC. Over the past four years, we worked with the DFC to complete 116 financial transactions representing \$2 billion in DFC commitments, which is expected to derisk and mobilize an additional \$4.2 billion in private capital toward development goals. USAID Operating Units in more than 40 countries across five continents partnered with the DFC and the private sector to achieve this milestone. The majority of these transactions were in low- and lower-middle-income countries, and 31 percent were in fragile or conflict-affected states.

Prioritizing Inclusive Development


USAID embraced the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to address various disparities and discrimination in U.S. policy and programming, and expanded opportunities that enable people who are underrepresented or marginalized to fully participate in their societies and economies. In 2024, programming from our Inclusive Development Hub alone reached more than one million people who are marginalized or in vulnerable situations, with additional programming from our Missions reaching many millions more. We also invested in organizations and advocates at the center of this work, training more than 37,000 service providers and building the capacity of over 3,000 organizations that serve marginalized populations.

Our teams responded to the growing threats and challenges experienced by marginalized communities. Amid a surge in attacks and crackdowns on members of the LGBTQI+ community, we expanded resources for LGBTQI+ programs by 70 percent over the course of the Administration, from \$6 million in 2021 to \$25 million in 2024, and created new activities that went beyond traditional focus areas (such as HIV/AIDS) and addressed locally identified needs identified through engagements with LGBTQI+ stakeholders. We launched USAID's first Agency-wide Racial and Ethnic Equity Initiative to help the Agency better include minorities in our programming throughout the world. We used development diplomacy to advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities: we offered the first-ever U.S. commitments to the Global Disability Summit; joined the State Department as new co-chair of the Global Action on Disability Network; undertook a coordinated response to the needs of persons with disabilities affected by the war in Ukraine; and supported the launch of national assistive technology programs in partnership with the governments of Cambodia, Georgia, Kenya, and Tajikistan. USAID also spearheaded the ATscale multi-sector partnership with the UK, WHO, UNICEF, and International Disability Alliance, with the goal of providing 500 million people with assistive technology by 2030. We also elevated efforts to partner with Indigenous Peoples, from supporting their leadership on biodiversity conservation to creating new initiatives to foster economic opportunity and help protect Indigenous environmental defenders from a rising number of attacks.

Additionally, we encouraged new partnerships with marginalized groups, launched a range of far-reaching policies prioritizing the participation of marginalized groups in USAID's work, and provided new financial and programmatic support for Missions to analyze how programming could better serve hard-to-reach populations. We also strengthened and elevated local expertise and capacity to conduct research and program monitoring and evaluation. For example, we required every USAID-commissioned evaluation to include a local expert on the evaluation team, and



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we initiated a Local Evaluation and Evidence Support (LEES) effort to invest in the capacities of local evidence organizations in countries such as Ghana and Zambia.

Importantly, to ensure development efforts do no harm, we renewed our collective commitment as an Agency to assessing, managing, and monitoring the potential social impact risks associated with each of our programs. We launched the Agency's first-ever Social Impact Risk Screening tool to help minimize operational and reputational risks for the Agency, requiring that Missions use the tool to screen for potential negative impacts of our programming so that social harms can be avoided and mitigated during program design and implementation. And we instituted new guidance requiring that program participants be made aware of the ways in which our policies provide protections for their safety and well-being.

Advancing Locally Led Development

To truly make development inclusive, local voices need to be at the center of all that we do around the world. We undertook a series of actions and reforms to strengthen local systems and put local actors in the lead of our development work, building on years of efforts to move USAID toward a model of locally led and inclusive development. This model emphasizes the essential knowledge of people in the communities where we work, respects their expertise, and engages them as partners rather than as beneficiaries.

To motivate progress and hold ourselves accountable, we set two Agency-wide targets in November 2021. First, we committed to direct a quarter of USAID's funding directly to local partners by the end of FY 2025. Since announcing this target in November 2021, we have channeled nearly \$5.5 billion directly to local nongovernmental, private-sector, and government partners, as well as an additional \$212 million to regional partners. In FY 2024, direct funding to these partners reached 12.1 percent of our assistance. While we have a ways to go to achieve our 25 percent goal, the \$1.9 billion we channeled directly to local nongovernmental and private-sector partners in FY 2024 is double the volume of funds we provided to these types of partners in FY 2021—and 120 percent higher than it was, on average, the decade prior.

We have also increased the number of new awards to local partners by 87 percent since 2021, and we worked with 48 percent more local partners in the final year of the Biden-Harris Administration than we did in the first year. USAID's global health programs led the way; over the course of the Administration, we increased the percentage of HIV/AIDS awards going to local organizations from 44 percent (\$731 million) to 65 percent (approximately \$1 billion) of USAID's PEPFAR budget, building toward a future where partner countries will lead in achieving and maintaining epidemic control. Democracy and governance, economic growth, and humanitarian programs also markedly increased funding to local partners over the last four years.


In addition to shifting funding, we also focused on shifting greater influence to local actors and communities. Our second—and equally important—localization target committed that by 2030, at least half of USAID programs would include local actors exercising leadership over priority-setting, program design, program implementation, and definition and measurement of results. As part of this effort, we started to track the extent to which USAID programs employ a set of good practices—such as engaging in co-creation of program design and implementation; making local subawards; providing direct monetary transfers to families, individuals, and microenterprises; adapting programs based on local feedback; and more—that elevate local leadership. In FY 2024, 35 percent of our programs used at least one good practice for local leadership in each of the three phases of the project lifecycle: design; implementation; and monitoring, evaluation and learning.

Over the course of the Biden-Harris Administration, USAID also advanced ambitious policies and practical reforms to elevate and institutionalize our commitment to locally led development. We supported staff—through guidance, training, and other tools and resources—to integrate the needs, experiences, and knowledge of local actors throughout the Program Cycle. We reduced barriers to entry for local organizations that want to work with USAID, including by creating [WorkWithUSAID.gov](https://www.usaid.gov/work-with-usaid), a multi-language “front door” for those interested in becoming partners, which has connected more than 7,000 organizations to USAID—67 percent of which are local organizations. USAID has also enhanced outreach to local organizations, expanded the use of local languages in our materials, and developed more flexible and tailorable pre-award assessments for local partners. We worked with the Office of Management and Budget and other agencies to advocate for flexibilities that support new and local partners in the 2024 updates to the regulations that govern federal assistance awards. These updates include an increase in the “de minimis” indirect cost recovery rate, which allows new or smaller local (and other) USAID partners to achieve more reasonable, sustainable, and realistic cost recovery when implementing USAID assistance awards. We also looked internally, at steps within USAID’s control, for how we could be better partners to local organizations—such as by using mechanisms with lower compliance burdens, taking steps to support partners’ full cost recovery, and encouraging staff to reduce reporting burdens.

For the first time, USAID released a Local Capacity Strengthening Policy to drive how the Agency and its partners invest in the capacity of local actors and systems to better achieve results. We launched our first Policy on Locally Led Humanitarian Assistance, committing in emergency response operations to increase the role of local partners and the level of funding accessible to them. And we launched the development of an inaugural strategy on government-to-government assistance that will help USAID better leverage, where appropriate, the pivotal role partner governments play in locally led development and systems strengthening.



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USAID distinguished itself as a leader on localization in the global development community. We helped spearhead a Donor Statement on Locally Led Development, endorsed by 20 other bilateral funders and 26 philanthropic foundations that committed to shift and share power, channel funding as directly as possible, and advocate publicly for efforts to advance locally led development. We also leveraged our humanitarian diplomacy and other creative tools, including the use of pooled-fund mechanisms, to combine our resources with those of other donors and help expedite the distribution of resources to local partners on the front lines of crises.

Communicating with the World

Widely and effectively communicating the impact of America's generous contributions to development progress is central to USAID's efforts, particularly in an era of increased strategic competition. Unprecedented foreign information manipulation, combined with the overwhelming number of communication channels and the pace of news cycles, has made it easier for adversaries to distort and undermine U.S. assistance programs. Many of our development objectives—such as strengthening democracy, building resilient health systems, and driving action on pollution—depend on citizen trust and behavior change, making communications a critical tool across all aspects of our work.

To advance our development objectives and build goodwill toward the United States, we significantly invested in improving USAID's strategic communications. We placed communications at the heart of USAID's operations; elevated the role communications plays as central to policy formulation and implementation; surged training and resources to our global network of communicators; and diversified and expanded the tools we are using to tell our story.

To better reach the full range of key audiences—from the American public, to Congress, to people living in our partner countries—we created the Agency's first Chief Communications Officer, putting communications at the table for key decisions, and worked with Mission Directors to prioritize communications at USAID's Missions around the world. We leveraged communications to advance U.S. interests and shape perceptions of the United States in partner countries—launching campaigns that raised funds for emergency nutritional supplies, building a first-of-its-kind global coalition to tackle global lead poisoning, and surging attention to countries experiencing democratic opportunities. We also introduced innovative campaigns, complemented by advertisements and road shows, that focused on improving awareness among foreign constituencies about U.S. investments to address issues such as food insecurity.

To make this possible, we stepped up training and opportunities for USAID's overseas communicators and increased engagement with a range of media outlets, with a focus on providing significant time and access to local media in countries in which senior leaders traveled. We engaged external validators and influencers with millions of followers, and we invested in creative engagements such as food and sports diplomacy to amplify key messaging, break through to new audiences, and better adapt our communications for local contexts. We developed rapid-response and in-house multimedia capabilities including video and design teams to respond quickly and effectively in a fast-paced and digital media landscape. And as we returned from remote working, we integrated lessons from the pandemic to build an effective hybrid events environment that has delivered more than 150 events per year for our workforce and enabled us to design and produce large-scale summits, convenings, and livestreams for external audiences all over the world.